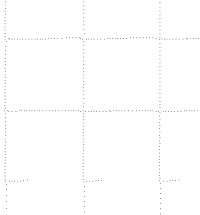


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From: Harris-Bishop, Rusty
Sent: Mon 8/10/2015 6:37:41 PM
Subject: Tour of Gold King Mine with President Begaye and staff



Hi Everyone:

I wanted to give a quick summary of the tour yesterday of the Gold King Mine near Silverton, CO that I did yesterday with Navajo Nation President Begaye and other dignitaries.

We received notice Sunday morning that Vice President Jonathon Nez, Navajo EPA chief Dr. Donald Benn, and 8 others would be flying to Durango and arrive at 1:30 pm for a tour of the Gold King Mine Site. We had been told by the OSCs that they would not be able to accommodate a tour, but I rented a vehicle to take them as far as we could to see the impact of the mine release.

I met Dr. Benn at the airport while picking up the car, and met the group. We then drove into Durango to meet President Begaye and his chief of staff, Rob Joe. (I'm still waiting for the names and titles, but there was an attorney from the Navajo Attorney General, Ethel; and attorney for Navajo DNR, Bitsa; Dr. Benn, Navajo EPA; Kerass from the President's office; and the President's police escort, Arnold Silversmith.)

We drove to Silverton and observed Cement Creek right before it enters the Animas River. (Picture 1)



Someone emptied a water bottle and took a sample of the water here, and also scooped up some sediment and put it in a plastic bag.

We then headed up toward the mine on a county road, when the OSC on-site called me, and we met on the road. He agreed to take us as far as we could go in our vehicles, and said that lack of safety gear was ok since there wasn't any active construction work going on. We were able to get all the way to the top of the mine, and the OSC (Hays Griswold) gave us a great overview of what work was being done when the release occurred. He also spoke in general terms about the other abandoned mines in the area, and that along with State of Colorado abandoned mine representatives, EPA has been working to assess and evaluate the dozens to hundreds of mine this region.



We observed the treatment system injecting lime into the discharge to raise the pH, and the flocculating chemical meant to drop out the sediments. We observed the first settling pond, and could see one of the other three ponds down at the bottom of the gulch.





After spending approximately 30 minutes up at the mine, we drove back to Durango and caught the last minutes of the public meeting. The President and Vice President both spoke, and related their impressions of the mine tour, the condition of the Cement Creek, and their insistence on federal accountability, information sharing, action plans, and long term response actions.

They departed for the airport after the meeting, stopping for dinner where they ran into the Region 8 PIO and talked to her about the two Chapter House meetings what we'd been requested to attend.

I have some additional photos and a video if y'all would like to see the discharge from the adit down the hill to the first settling pond.

Rusty

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**Rusty Harris-Bishop** • Superfund Project Manager • Communications Liaison • US Environmental Protection Agency •

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